AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

LISTING OF CLAIMS:

1. (currently amended): An image regulation apparatus that regulates an image, said image regulation apparatus comprising:

a transparency specification module that specifies a degree of transparency; a transparent range specification module that specifies an arbitrary range of an image as a transparent range; and

a transparency setting module that, in response to specification of the transparent range, sets a new degree of transparency for each pixel of an image in the transparent range, based on a current setting of transparency for the image in the transparent range and the degree of transparency specified by said transparency specification module;

wherein, in response to specification of a transparent range including multiple ranges having current settings of different transparencies, the transparency setting module updates the current setting of transparency to the degree of transparency specified by said transparency specification module with regard to a pixel having a current setting of transparency lower than the specified degree of transparency, while maintaining the current setting of transparency with regard to a pixel having a current setting of transparency higher than the specified degree of transparency.

2. (withdrawn): An image regulation apparatus in accordance with claim 1, wherein said transparency setting module selectively sets a lower degree of transparency between the specified degree of transparency and the current setting of transparency, as the new degree of transparency for the image in the transparent range.

3. (withdrawn): An image regulation apparatus in accordance with claim 1, wherein said transparency setting module selectively sets a higher degree of transparency between the specified degree of transparency and the current setting of transparency, as the new degree of transparency for the image in the transparent range.

4. (cancelled).

5. (withdrawn): An image regulation apparatus in accordance with claim 1, wherein the degree of transparency is set for each pixel.

6. (withdrawn): An image regulation apparatus in accordance with claim 1, wherein said transparency specification module is capable of specifying multiple stages of transparency in a range of 0 to 100%.

7. (withdrawn): An image regulation apparatus in accordance with claim 1, wherein said transparent range specification module specifies two points to define the transparent range.

8. (withdrawn): An image regulation apparatus in accordance with claim 1, said image regulation apparatus being capable of regulate a layout of image areas in which images are displayed.

9. (withdrawn): An image regulation apparatus in accordance with claim 8, wherein one of the image areas is a frame image area, in which a frame image functioning as a frame of an arbitrary image is displayed.

10. (currently amended): An image regulation method that regulates an image, said image regulation method comprising the steps of:

(a) specifying a degree of transparency;

(b) specifying an arbitrary range of an image as a transparent range; and

(c) in response to specification of the transparent range, setting a new degree of transparency for an image in the transparent range, based on a current setting of transparency for the image in the transparent range and the degree of transparency specified by said step (a), and in response to specification of a transparent range including multiple ranges having current settings of different transparencies, updating the current setting of transparency to the degree of transparency specified by with regard to a pixel having a current setting of transparency lower than the specified degree of transparency, while maintaining the current setting of transparency with regard to a pixel having a current setting of transparency higher than the specified degree of transparency.

11. (withdrawn): An image regulation method in accordance with claim 10, wherein

said step(c) selectively sets a lower degree of transparency between the specified degree of

transparency and the current setting of transparency, as the new degree of transparency for the

image in the transparent range.

12. (withdrawn): An image regulation method in accordance with claim 10, wherein

said step(c) selectively sets a higher degree of transparency between the specified degree of

transparency and the current setting of transparency, as the new degree of transparency for the

image in the transparent range.

13. (cancelled).

14. (withdrawn): An image regulation method in accordance with claim 10, wherein the

degree of transparency is set for each pixel.

15. (withdrawn): An image regulation method in accordance with claim 10, wherein

said step(a) is capable of specifying multiple stages of transparency in a range of 0 to 100%.

16. (withdrawn): An image regulation method in accordance with claim 10, wherein

said step(a) specifies two points to define the transparent range.

17. (withdrawn): A storage medium that stores therein a computer program used to regulate an image, said computer program comprising: a module that, in response to specification of a degree of transparency and an arbitrary range of an image as a transparent range, sets a new degree of transparency for an image in the transparent range, based on a current setting of transparency for the image in the transparent range and the specified degree of transparency.